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# 'Every Effort' Made to Find MIAs – pg. 2




# How Joint Casualty Center Works – pg. 14



*DoD Photo*

**Joint Casualty Resolution Center team sifts through sand, searching for a reported gravesite in South Vietnam.**

## *Joint Casualty Resolution Center*

# DoD Makes 'Every Effort' to Find MIAs

"The problems surrounding the question of Americans not yet accounted for are difficult in every respect; we are prepared to do the job through the machinery that we now have in motion, but we are convinced that the issue will not be resolved quickly or easily."

The Department of Defense position regarding the accounting for Servicemen carried as PW/MIA was so summarized by Dr. Roger E. Shields, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Economic Affairs) before a House foreign affairs subcommittee.

In a post "Operation Homecoming" appearance before the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development, Dr. Shields recapitulated the return of 591 Americans between February 12 and April 1, described the functioning of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center and the Four-Party Joint Military Team, and spoke to the degree of success that may ultimately be achieved in the MIA issue.

"While we are grateful for the return of these men [566 American Servicemen held as prisoners of war], our joy and sense of accomplishment are tempered by the fact that others, listed by our Government as missing and captured, did not return," he said.

"The Department of Defense will continue to seek the fullest possible accounting for these men and to provide their families with every possible assistance just as we have in the past. In addition, we will seek to recover the remains of the missing who have died and those who are already listed as killed in action but whose remains have not been recovered."

Dr. Shields pointed out that, prior to the release of Americans by the other side, every possible avenue was explored to gain accurate information about those listed as missing or captured. Even while repatriation activities were planned, he said, the United States simultaneously prepared for the time when direct action to account for the missing would be possible through negotiation or systematic search.

He explained that extensive data have been gathered and stored in automated data handling systems for ease in correlation and analysis. This data include extensive descriptive information on the individuals concerned, such as carefully plotted locations where they were last seen, and eyewitness accounts from American forces, as well as all accessible indigenous residents who were known to possess information about American prisoners or missing. One computerized program contains information taken from medical records concerning all individual physical characteristics which will help in the identification of remains that are recovered.

"There are now two primary agencies upon which we are relying heavily to help resolve the status of our missing," Dr. Shields said.

These are the Four-Party Joint Military Team (FPJMT) and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC). In accordance with the agreements signed in Paris, the FPJMT was established after termination of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission expressly for the purpose of arranging for the recovery of remains and exchanging information to help clarify the status of the missing.

Dr. Shields listed three primary aspects of the mission of the United States delegation to the FPJMT:

- Obtaining information from the other side about U.S. military and civilian persons who are missing in action;
- Obtaining information about the location of the graves of those persons who died in captivity or were killed in action; and
- Negotiating entry rights for U.S. search and inspection operations into areas where there are believed to be unrecovered remains or where those still unaccounted for were last believed to be located.

The chief of the U.S. delegation is responsible through the Defense Attache Office in Saigon and the U.S. Support Activity Group in Thailand to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific. The U.S. delegation is also responsive to the policy guidance and instructions of the U.S. Ambassador in Saigon.

Since the first meeting of the team on April 4, scores of sessions have been held. On two occasions, on May 11 and on May 18, the team—along with representatives of the JCRC—journeyed to North Vietnam where burial sites, allegedly of American Servicemen, were seen. Identification and recovery of the remains were not undertaken on these occasions because of lack of permission from the North Vietnamese. The FPJMT, Dr. Shields said, is still trying to arrange for the exhumation and repatriation of these remains and of any other American dead known to the other side.

Another issue of major concern, he said, is the acquisition of entry rights for U.S. search teams to areas throughout Southeast Asia where American Servicemen are missing. The success of the JCRC's mission, he emphasized, depends heavily on the operating authorities and the cooperation of the countries involved.

"We believe that our search teams should be given access to all locations where our men are believed to be missing. This is especially true for Laos, where only nine Americans were listed for repatriation while over 300 of our men still remain unaccounted for," Dr. Shields said.

American teams, he pointed out, possess the great expertise required for this complex and dangerous mission, as well as the motivation to do a complete and thorough job. Nevertheless, he said, the U.S. invites and welcomes host-country participation in the activities of American field teams.

"Indeed, we feel that host-country participation is essential to the safety of our own teams and to the success of the mission," he said.

Dr. Shields emphasized that the overall effort of casualty resolution will be both difficult and dangerous. On one of the first search operations, he said, a South Vietnamese soldier was killed by an unexploded booby trap while participating with an advance element that had been sent to clear the area for the main search party.

In discussing the question of the degree of success that may ultimately be achieved and how long this may take, Dr. Shields said that, unfortunately, debriefings of returned Servicemen had not produced the large quantities of information about those missing men that had been expected.

Prior to the repatriation of U.S. prisoners of war, expectations were high that large numbers of missing-in-action cases could be resolved from debriefings of the returned men. This did not prove to be the case, Dr. Shields said.

"How quickly we will achieve results from the various continuing efforts I cannot say. The FPJMT has made some progress in this area, and I am hopeful that our patience and persistence will be rewarded by ultimate success."

However, Dr. Shields pointed out, even after all information has been exchanged and all known remains exhumed and repatriated, there undoubtedly will be cases remaining to be resolved.

"Take as an example," he said, "the case of a missing aircraft which crashed in the sea or uninhabited jungle. It is likely neither side in the recent conflict would know the whereabout of the wreckage or the fate of the crew."

"In other cases, even though the locations were once known, it is possible that both wreckage and gravesites may have succumbed to the ravages of time and the havoc of war. It is abundantly clear that the tasks of determining how some of our missing died and the recovery of remains could be prolonged, if not impossible."

Dr. Shields continued, "As for those who are thought to have been captured alive but who have not been returned, let

## *Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) Principles of Operation*

1. **The JCRC has an overt, humanitarian mission. We must be totally open in all dealings, avoiding any occurrence which may be considered, even by inference, as being covert or clandestine.**
2. **JCRC field teams will not operate in a hostile environment.**
3. **Although indigenous and international assistance is very welcome and vital to our mission, actual on-site investigation and inspection must be accomplished by U.S. specialists.**
4. **The JCRC will be manned by the most motivated, dedicated, professional men available in the Armed Forces.**
5. **The JCRC is mission oriented and will be capable to react to inevitable changes in operating parameters.**

me say that this is, perhaps, the most agonizing and frustrating issue of all. These are the cases of men who were seen on the ground or whose pictures were released subsequent to capture but who, for one reason or another, have not returned and for whom the other side has yet to provide a satisfactory explanation.

"We do not consider the lists received so far to be a complete and accurate accounting for our men. We do have, though, an agreement which provides for all actions necessary to account as completely as possible for all who have not returned or are otherwise unaccounted for. We believe that implementation of this agreement will provide the speediest and most satisfactory answers to our questions."

Dr. Shields said that United States authorities have continuously been working to finalize arrangements to provide for the speedy return of remains of known U.S. dead from locations throughout Southeast Asia and for the acquisition of clarifying information on any others.

He pointed out that, nonetheless, the task of inspecting crash sites or locations where the missing were last seen and of finding, exhuming, and identifying remains may be difficult and prolonged, at least over several years, especially if operating limitations remain an obstacle. Some crash sites and gravesites, he said, may never be found.

Dr. Shields emphasized that the problems surrounding the question of those not yet accounted for are difficult in every respect.

"We are prepared," he said, "to do the job through the machinery that we now have in motion, but we are convinced that the issue will not be resolved quickly or easily.

"I want to assure all concerned that the Department of Defense will uphold its responsibilities and its obligations in this matter. We will provide the families of our missing men every possible assistance. For those who must face a final negative determination, we are prepared to offer complete counseling and guidance to help ease the resulting burdens, as well as heartfelt sympathy."

## *Narrative Accounts*

# 1,300 Americans Still Missing

Some 1,300 American Servicemen are still missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, and many of them are airmen who were downed in North Vietnam.

All of the airmen were known to have been alive on the ground in North Vietnam or were at one time actually identified by the North Vietnamese as having been captured.

The other side's continued refusal to provide all information it has about these and the many other Americans casts serious doubt on the good faith of the North Vietnamese government in the execution of the Paris agreements of last January.

Too, the anguish of the families of the missing men has now been prolonged by the other side for some 9 months after the agreements were reached.

Here are narrative accounts of some typical missing airmen:

**Waters, Samuel E., Captain, United States Air Force**—downed in Hoa Binh Province, North Vietnam, on December 13, 1966. Captain Waters was seen to eject successfully and to deploy a good parachute. The December 16, 1966, edition of the *Vietnam Courier*, a newspaper published in Hanoi, reported that Captain Waters was captured on December 13, 1966. An Agence France Press report of December 17, 1966, stated that he was killed on December 13, 1966. On January 21, 1967, a Bulgarian Newspaper, *Naroda Armiya*, carried an article quoting Captain Waters and including a picture of his personal identity documents.

**Estes, Walter O., II, Lieutenant (jg.), United States Navy, and Teague, James E., Lieutenant (jg.), United States Navy**—downed near Haiphong on November 19, 1967. An Associated Press wirephoto originated by the Vietnam News Agency (North Vietnam) showed clearly the identity cards of Lieutenants Estes and Teague and stated that they were "captured in Haiphong."

**Mellor, Frederic M., Captain, United States Air Force**—lost on August 13, 1965, in Son La Province, North Vietnam. Captain Mellor reported by radio that he had successfully landed without serious injury. He was advised to avoid further contact until the arrival of rescue forces. When the helicopter approached the area and an attempt was made to contact the downed pilot, there was no reply. Subsequent search operations were negative.

**Capling, Elwyn R., Major, United States Air Force**—downed in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, on September 19, 1968. Other pilots in the area observed Major Capling's successful ejection and landing on the ground. By radio he reported his leg was broken and requested help. Rescue attempts were impossible because of the heavy concentration of North Vietnamese forces in the immediate area.

**Monroe, Vincent D., Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy**—downed in Nghe An Province, North Vietnam, on May 18, 1968. Emergency radio signals were received from Commander Monroe. Radio Hanoi announced the capture of two pilots at the time and place of Commander Monroe's loss.

**Brucher, John M., Captain, United States Air Force**—ejected from an F-105D on February 18, 1969, in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, near the Laotian border. Captain Brucher reported landing in a tree, suspended in mid-air and unable to free himself from his parachute. He later reported having a dislocated shoulder. Rescue efforts were suspended until the following day. When the rescue helicopter returned no contact could be made with Captain Brucher. His parachute was still hanging in the tree, empty.

**Patterson, James K., Lieutenant, United States Navy**—a crew member in an A6A aircraft shot down on May 19, 1967, in Hai Duong Province, North Vietnam. Lieutenant Patterson reported by radio that he had a badly broken leg and probably could not move.

## In Providing Information

# Diplomatic Note Protests Lack of Progress

On July 29, 1973, a diplomatic note protesting the lack of progress on the part of the other side in providing information on Americans still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia was forwarded from the White House to the United States Embassy in Paris.

On the same day, the note was relayed to the Paris Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). American officials delivering the protest were assured that it would be forwarded to Hanoi.

The text of the diplomatic note follows:

In view of the fact that more than six months have elapsed since the signing of the January 27, 1973, agreement on Vietnam and more than six weeks since the signing of the joint communique of June 13, 1973, the U.S. Government (USG) notes with serious concern that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has failed to comply with Article 8B of the agreement and paragraph 8E of the joint communique which require the parties to "help each other to get information about those military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties missing in action, to determine the location and take care of the graves of the dead so as to facilitate the exhumation and repatriation of the remains, and to take any such other measures as may be required to get information about those still considered missing in action." Although there have been continuing discussions of these subjects in the Four-Party Joint Military Team (FPJMT), the DRV has refused to cooperate in the necessary actions to implement this basic humanitarian obligation.

The USG has provided complete lists of American personnel listed as missing in action with requests for information. No information has been provided. The USG has repeatedly sought to arrange the repatriation of remains of Americans who died in captivity. No remains have been repatriated.

The accounting for the missing and the repatriation of remains are purely humanitarian obligations unrelated to other issues. They could have been largely carried out by now if a spirit of goodwill and cooperation had been manifested on this subject. This would have brought solace to the families and loved ones of the more than 1,300 Americans listed as missing, and of those who have died but whose bodies have not been returned.

The USG calls again on the DRV to help to get information on the military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties missing in action. This can be accomplished promptly by responding to the request for information on the lists that have already been provided. The USG would be pleased to provide additional data on specific cases to assist in getting such information. The USG also requests the DRV promptly to accomplish the exhumation and repatriation of remains, and to enable the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) to carry out its humanitarian mission.

# Social Security Administration Clarifies Benefits

Recently, the Social Security Administration clarified a World War II survivor benefits policy that is also applicable to the families of some Servicemen who are MIA in Southeast Asia.

The policy applies in cases of presumptive determinations of death. In these cases, the date of death for social security claims is established as the date the Serviceman entered a missing status (including missing in action and prisoner of war), in the absence of convincing evidence establishing a later date of death.

This means that social security benefits can be paid to his survivors beginning on that date, if the Serviceman had at least 18 months of social security coverage either through military service or civilian work. This policy also means that no military pay earned after that date will be used in computing benefit amounts.

Dependent children and widows caring for these children are among the principal beneficiaries of survivor benefits based on this policy. An eligible child is an unmarried child under age 18, under age 22 if a full-time student, or of any age, if severely disabled before age 18 and still disabled. Even though a child is over an age of eligibility or married by the time benefits can be paid on a monthly basis, all benefits for which the child and widow were eligible after the Serviceman entered the missing status can be paid retroactively in a lump sum.

Other persons who are eligible social security beneficiaries are widows 60 or older, if no children are entitled to survivor payments, or 50 or older, if disabled within 7 years of the Serviceman's death or of the date no children in their care were eligible for benefits.

Dependent parents 62 or over may also receive survivor payments based on a deceased Serviceman's social security account.

**Payment of social security benefits is not automatic. In the case of either a presumptive determination of death or a factual determination of death, a claim must be filed before benefits can be paid retroactively or on a monthly basis.**

*During Washington Meeting*

# League of Families Receives JCRC Briefing

More than 500 members of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia assembled again in Washington, D.C., in July. This time the organization had set as its purpose the emphasis to U.S. officials and the American public that fewer than one-third of the Americans listed as prisoner or missing were, in fact, returned alive following the signing of the Paris Agreements last January.

Six months after the January ceasefire, National League of Families members pointed out, some 1,300 American Servicemen are still unaccounted for in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. This fact was the common bond that brought wives, parents, and brothers and sisters to the Statler Hilton Hotel July 27-29 for the National League of Families' fourth annual meeting.

Obtaining an accounting for each of these Americans and assisting in resolving the matter of when a status change can be most judiciously awarded by the Department of Defense were the goals set by the membership and its board of directors for the coming year.

Through several of the 31 resolutions passed during business meetings at the annual session, those in attendance made it known that they blame the North Vietnamese for failures in accounting for missing Americans and in delays encountered in repatriation of remains. Under the terms of the Agreement, members are well aware that North Vietnam accepted the responsibility for the accounting of all missing Americans throughout Southeast Asia. To date, no information has been provided by the other side beyond the 55 names transmitted during Agreement signing procedures, as those American Servicemen who had died while in captivity.

The resolutions also made it clear that the National League of Families feels the United States Government can do more to break the impasse.

Some nine resolutions addressed the matter of status change and further casualty information to families. Among other measures, the National League strongly recommended that uniform accounting and notification procedures be adopted by the Department of Defense and the four Services.

The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia has as its membership more American PW/MIA families than any other of the many organizations formed during the past several years to bring attention to the inhumane treatment suffered by Americans at the hands of their Southeast Asia captors.

Major events of the three-day meeting included a briefing by Army Brigadier General Robert C. Kingston, commander of the United States Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC), now operating out of Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base in Northeast Thailand. General Kingston discussed the mission of his unit, emphasizing difficulties encountered in obtaining authority to enter any areas of Southeast Asia (SEA) other than territory controlled by South Vietnam.

The unit's mission, he said, includes locating live Americans, if in fact there are Americans still alive in SEA, as well as locating the gravesites and crash sites of missing men or men killed in action but for whom no bodies have yet been recovered.

The authority to enter areas of SEA must come through negotiations within the Four-Party Joint Military Team, he said. The time frame in which authority may be granted to enter areas other than those controlled by South Vietnam is hard to foresee, he continued.

General Kingston's briefing included film clips that gave PW/MIA families a look at the operations thus far conducted by the highly trained personnel of the JCRC to locate crash sites and gravesites and recover remains if found. The final step in the JCRC's mission is to determine positive identification of the remains, if possible, and make appropriate recommendations to each Service Secretary.

Personnel of the JCRC have been allowed to visit American gravesites in North Vietnam twice, the general said, but to date permission to exhume and repatriate the remains has not been granted by that government.

Dr. Roger E. Shields, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Eco-

## *MIA Accountability Stressed*

***"Upon the termination of the longest, and in many respects the most difficult, period of combat in our Nation's history, I give you my personal salute for a job well done. The tremendous sacrifices and, in particular, the supreme effort by our comrades who were lost during the war have not been in vain. . . . You have performed superbly; your spirit and elan have remained steadfast throughout; the human qualities and greatness handed down from past military generations have remained undiminished.***

***"Now the long conflict has come to a close, but our tasks remain. In coming months we must take every effort to account for those still missing in action, while we prepare ourselves for the future. . . .***

**Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN**
**Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff**

nomic Affairs), and Mr. Frank Seiverts, State Department principal assistant for PW/MIA matters, also were present for the casualty resolution briefing for the families. Both officials have worked closely with PW/MIA families for several years and figured prominently in "Operation Homecoming."

Several representatives from the offices of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health and Environment, plus representatives of the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service, participated in a Federal benefits panel for PW/MIA families. Specialists from these agencies explained the laws affecting cash payments and other benefits to family members and answered questions ranging from what basic survivor benefits are paid by the Department of Defense following the death of a Service member to whether adoption of an MIA's child would preclude the child's receiving Social Security payments.

A highlight of the meeting for many was the annual National League dinner on Saturday evening, at which the Honorable Robert J. Huber, freshman Republican Congressman from Michigan, and Commander Richard A. Stratton, a prisoner of war in North Vietnam from 1967 to 1973, shared the podium as special guests.

Congressman Huber is the drafter and initial sponsor of a resolution calling on the United States Government to cease "all consideration of aid, trade, diplomatic recognition or any other form of communications, travel, or accommodation" with North Vietnam or the Viet Cong unless they begin honoring their agreements to facilitate the search for Americans missing in Southeast Asia. Introduced on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 20, the resolution has some 44 House sponsors. A companion resolution was introduced in the Senate on July 27, under sponsorship of Senator John Tower, Republican from Texas, and eight fellow Senators.

Mr. Huber told the families that in wartime the Government comes first, but in peacetime the citizen comes first.

Quoting from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, he said, " 'They shall not have died in vain.' We are going to find out what happened to those MIAs, so help me God!"

Commander Stratton credited the National League of Families with his return, stressed unity of purpose for the League and other Americans, and characterized himself as only a symbol of all Americans who had served in Vietnam. He paid special tribute to those who had suffered disabilities or had given their lives, as well as to those who had been imprisoned.

Mrs. Iris Powers, mother of an Army pilot missing in South Vietnam since 1969 and long active in the National League of Families, was elected President

## Five Provisions

# Protocol Deals With MIAs in Laos

The situation in Laos passed one more signpost toward the organization and operation of a new government there when the Royal Laotian Government and the Lao Patriotic Front (Pathet Lao) unanimously agreed to a Protocol to Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and Reconciliation in Laos on September 14.

The protocol is an implementing document for Article 5 of the agreement signed by the two Lao sides last February 21.

The protocol provides for a Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement and the preparation by this group of a plan for the withdrawal from Laos of troops and military personnel of foreign countries, except for those provided for in the 1954 and 1962 Geneva accords on Laos.

The plan will be divided into three stages. Each stage will be 20 days apart, and all must be completed no later than 60 days from the date of establishment of the Provisional Government of National Union and the Joint National Political Council.

Regarding prisoners of war and missing persons, the protocol contains the following provisions:

- The return of all persons, regardless of nationality, that were captured and imprisoned for cooperating with the other side during the war, will be accomplished in three stages and completed at the same time as the withdrawal of foreign troops and military personnel.
- The return of prisoners at each stage from each side will be reported by number of persons (to be returned), by grouping location and time to the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement 48 hours in advance.
- Within 15 to 30 days from the date of signing of the protocol, each side will report the number of those captured and imprisoned to the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement, indicating nationality and whether military or civilian, together with a list of names of those who died in captivity.
- After the return of the prisoners is completed, each side must report as quickly as possible to the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement information it is able to obtain about persons missing during the war regardless of nationality.
- The return of those captured and imprisoned during the war and the gathering of information that each side will submit about the persons missing during the war is the responsibility of the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement. When both sides in the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement believe it necessary, they may request assistance from the International Control Commission.

### Protocol Obligations Not Fulfilled

**Although the Protocol calls for each side to report within 15 to 30 days the number of those captured or imprisoned to the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement, together with a list of names of those who died in captivity, the Pathet Lao have yet to provide information about those Americans still unaccounted for in Laos.**

of the organization's board of directors. Scott Albright, father of an Air Force pilot missing over Laos since 1968, was named the group's first executive director. A colonel in the U.S. Air Force, Albright assumed the full-time position following his July 31 retirement.

Prior to Albright's selection, the National League of Families had been managed on a daily basis by a member selected by the board to serve for a year without salary as National Coordinator. Believing it necessary to build the same degree of public interest and impact for the MIA problem as was attained for the PW/MIA problem prior to "Operation Homecoming," leaders of the League felt the organization was well enough established to hire a full-time paid manager to direct its activities. This also relieves a member of the hardship of relocating her family to Washington for a year as the nonsalaried National Coordinator. [Mrs. Virginia West of Maryland was named National Coordinator during a Board meeting held in Washington, D.C., on August 26.]

Mrs. Helene L. Knapp, an MIA wife from Colorado Springs, Colorado, served as National Coordinator last year. The position will continue in operation, but not from the League's national headquarters in Washington. Selection of this key volunteer by the board of directors is pending.

Mrs. Powers succeeds Mrs. Darlene Sadler, an MIA wife from Houston, Texas. Mrs. Sadler stepped into the board chairman's duties last February when Mrs. Phyllis Galanti's husband, Cmdr. Paul E. Galanti, was repatriated during "Operation Homecoming."

COMMANDERS DIGEST

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## *In Southeast Asia*

# General Kingston Heads JCRC

Brigadier General Robert C. Kingston was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on July 16, 1928. He entered the U.S. Army as an enlisted man in November 1948. The following year he attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Riley, Kansas, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry on December 20, 1949.

Between 1950 and 1954, General Kingston served as platoon leader, company executive officer, and company commander in the 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry in Korea.

In 1954 and 1955, General Kingston served as executive officer, Ranger Mountain Camp, Dahlonega, Georgia. From 1956 to 1959, he served as an Airborne Infantry company commander and as the assistant division G-2 in the 82d Airborne Division. In 1959, Gen. Kingston completed the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1960 and 1961, he served as the exchange airborne officer with the 16th Independent Parachute Group, United Kingdom.

In August 1961, General Kingston was assigned to the Operations Division, Headquarters, U.S. Army, Europe. In June 1963, he was reassigned to the United States to the Test and Evaluation Group, the United States Army Airmobile Test Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia. He attended the University of Omaha in 1965 where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in General Education; the same year he entered the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia, graduating in January 1966. He was next assigned to Vietnam and initially served as senior advisor to the Army of Vietnam Ranger Command. Later, on the same tour, for nine months he commanded the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division.

In 1967, General Kingston was assigned as Chief of General Planning Branch, Plans and Programs Directorate, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Headquarters, Department of the Army. During 1968-1969, he attended the National War College, Washington, D.C. In 1969, he received his Master of Science degree in Foreign Relations from George Washington University. He then assumed command of the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



**Brig. Gen. R. C. Kingston**

In 1970, General Kingston was assigned as the Deputy Secretary of the General Staff, Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army. In 1972, he attended the Advanced Management Program for Executives, University of Pittsburgh. In June of 1972, General Kingston returned to Vietnam where he was promoted to brigadier general and served as Deputy Commanding General, Second Regional Assistance Command and as Deputy Senior Advisor, II Corps and Military Region 2. On January 23, 1973, Brigadier General Kingston assumed command of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

## Questions and Answers

# Special Joint Service Unit Seeks MIA Data

The following interview was conducted by *Commanders Digest* with Brig. Gen. Robert C. Kingston, USA, the commander of the U.S. joint service unit operating to locate, recover, and identify American MIAs and BNRs (body-not-received) in Southeast Asia.

**Commanders Digest:** General Kingston, as Commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) established last January and now operating from headquarters at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, will you highlight the unit's mission as you see it?

**General Kingston:** *I see the key to our mission as the actual conduct of operations to locate and investigate crash and gravesites and to recover remains of Americans in Southeast Asia. My charter calls for me to go into North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, when I get the authority to do so. As we get this authority, we will go into the territories where we have our missing and body-not-recovered in a most thorough attempt to identify remains and return those remains to the families.*

**CD:** Doesn't your mission also include the location and recovery of any Americans who may still be alive in Southeast Asia?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Indeed it does. We are looking for live Americans just as we are searching for the remains of those who are dead. Any information we receive on this—even a hint—is thoroughly investigated. Unfortunately, however, I have no new information that indicates that there are any American Servicemen still alive either in a captured or evader status in Southeast Asia. We, obviously, are all hoping that we will find some Americans still alive in Southeast Asia, but so far we have had no indication of this.*

**CD:** What numbers of Americans are we talking about?

**Gen. Kingston:** *A total of more than 2,400 missing and body-not-recovered. We have approximately 1,300 missing-in-action and about 1,100 body-not-recovered personnel. Of the total, approximately 1,000 are Air Force; 700, Army; 400, Navy; and 300, Marine Corps. More than 1,900 of those missing or bodies-not-recovered resulted from air crashes. We have more than 1,000 such crash sites, involving more than 50 different types and models of aircraft. The numbers vary from nearly 400 in North Vietnam to 20 in Cambodia. Approximately 180 of the crashes were at sea.*

**CD:** Your phrase "body-not-recovered" is a new one for us in the PW/MIA area. Will you explain it?

**Gen. Kingston:** *It is the term traditionally used when referring to persons who have been declared dead by their Services but the remains have not been recovered. MIA, of course, is missing-in-action personnel. The BNR are personnel whose remains have not been recovered but who have been declared dead by the respective Services. In all but a very few cases listed in my data, these persons were never on the missing list. Their families were notified from the very beginning that they were MIA.*

**CD:** Can you cite an example situation that would produce BNR personnel?

**Gen. Kingston:** *An aircraft goes down; somebody survives that crash. He knows that the other crew member was dead. They let down jungle penetrators, bring out the man that survived, and put down a paramedic. He says the other man is dead, "and we'll come back and get that body later; we have to get this guy to the hospital."*

*They go back. Because of hostile fire or some other reason, they can't get back into the area. They know that that man is dead, so he is carried KIA, body-not-recovered.*

**CD:** Your remarks here, plus others you have made while in Washington, make it clear that your casualty resolution is exceedingly difficult and technical. Will you discuss the major factors you see as contributing to this?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Of course, one of the main things is that I must operate—in the case of North Vietnam and South Vietnam—through the Four-Party Joint Military Team. In the case of Laos, the Pathet Lao has never agreed to discuss casualty resolution operations. They're still fighting in the Khmer [Cambodia], so we haven't been able to discuss adequately the arrangements we will eventually make, I hope, in the Khmer.*

*The procedures for getting me into the country, of course, are through the Four-Party Joint Military Team. So far, I've been allowed to operate only in the area controlled by the South Vietnamese. We have requested permission from the other members of the team to go into their territory. To date, they've not discussed this matter. Here is what I'm really saying: The key to my operation is accessibility. Approximately 95 percent of the known crash sites and gravesites—my statistics—are located in enemy or disputed territory. Only about 5 percent are in the South Vietnam-controlled area—the only area we have been allowed to enter so far.*

**CD:** And the physical difficulty?

**Gen. Kingston:** *The physical difficulty of our mission, of course, is the actual terrain in which we're operating: mountainous, jungle—in some cases paddy terrain down in the Delta. Eventually, we'll be operating, I hope, in all areas of North and South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos—in all of the types of rugged terrain to be found in the areas where we have missing and BNR personnel.*

*Also, I have an at-sea operation going right now in the Da Nang-Hue area, where we have a ship with sonar devices looking for crashes. When we locate wreckage we go down with the divers and attempt to recover any remains and positively identify the aircraft involved.*

*So, the technical difficulty for us is one of negotiations*

*and getting authority to go into the various areas. Then the physical difficulty is the inaccessibility of the crashes, many of them in remote areas with mountainous, jungle terrain and some of them in the sea.*

**CD:** Your people wear a distinctive marking, do they not?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Yes. We go into the field under the auspices of the Four-Party Joint Military Team. So we wear distinctive orange markings on the uniform and an orange armband with a "4" on it. The helicopters we use also have this marking.*

**CD:** How do you determine a specific site to be searched?

**Gen. Kingston:** *From the data the Military Services have provided the JCRC concerning the location of our MIA/BNR personnel, we have plotted coordinates in each case. So we know at least an approximate location for each. Also, through our public communications program with the indigenous population, we often get other information. In one operation, three Montagnards heard we were looking for Americans and let it be known they knew the location of an aircraft with skeletons in it. Since they couldn't read a map, we took them in a helicopter to a place on the ground they knew and could start to the site from. From there my team went with them overland. It took two days through the jungle, through thick trees from 120 to 150 feet high and very dense ground foliage, to reach the site. So we do operate with indigenous personnel —whoever owns that piece of terrain. This incident is typical of the way in which we can benefit from casualty information they may have and from their first-hand knowledge of the area in which a crash site or gravesite is located.*

*Some crash sites can be seen from the air. Once we have located the crash and gravesite, I fly my specialists in by helicopter.*

**CD:** What about live shells or booby traps at the site?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Among the first ones we fly in, of course, are the EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] personnel. We have found that in many cases, if the enemy has gotten to a crash site before we have, they often booby trap the site itself or the approaches. On one operation in South Vietnam, some of the indigenous forces securing a crash site for us did set off an explosive device. One man was killed and another had both legs blown off. Also, the aircraft has explosive devices on it—ejection seat devices and things of that type.*

*We want to make sure, before I put my search people in, that the aircraft site—crash site—is sterile.*

**CD:** Specialists assigned to your teams have various skills, do they not?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Yes. I have area specialists that are familiar with the area. In many cases, they are indigenous personnel from the local areas. We use them to go out and talk to any population that may be in the area. They try to get additional information on the site we're after.*

*I have four Air Force crash investigators. All are trained in the safety school in Southern California. Together, they have 19 years of experience in crash investigations. We will soon have a Navy and Army crash investigator as well. The memorial activity specialists are professionals who are highly trained on gravesite exhumation and on crash site investigation.*

*Once I get the team into the actual site, these people are the ones who take over and conduct the physical search of the crash or gravesite. We move thoroughly and carefully through the area to locate and recover the remains of our casualties, and also serial numbered components or other material that might help in identification.*

## JCRC Mission

**RESOLVE THE STATUS OF U.S. MISSING IN ACTION (MIA) AND BODIES NOT RECOVERED (BNR) PERSONNEL THROUGH THE CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS TO LOCATE AND INVESTIGATE CRASH SITES/GRAVESITES AND RECOVER REMAINS, AS APPROPRIATE, THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA.**

**CD:** And these remains and identifiable material?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Any remains found are returned by helicopter to our Forward Operating Base or directly to our Central Identification Laboratory located at Samae San, about 80 miles from Bangkok.*

**CD:** Have remains been recovered at any of the sites searched so far?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Yes, we have recovered some remains. Positive identification has been made in eight of these cases.*

*This is very tedious and difficult. Nonetheless, it is important that we do not unnecessarily delay identification. And this, you can be assured, we are not doing.*

**CD:** Doesn't the circumstances of most aircraft accidents contribute to the difficulty of locating remains and identifying them?

**Gen. Kingston:** *An aircraft crash is a traumatic event. In many cases, they explode upon impact; they break up on impact. We're looking, sifting this material out. This is our part of the actual search operation once we find the aircraft or the grave we are after. Of course, the difficulty at a gravesite is pinpointing the grave. We have a burial place in many cases; it's not a marked grave. Then we have to do the digging. I have the trained memorial specialists for the site search and recovery phases.*

**CD:** In one operation you mentioned having good coordinates for the location of an aircraft, apparently through last radio contact with the pilot or through radar. Yet, the aircraft was found some miles away.

**Gen. Kingston:** *That's correct. On my records we have, as in many of the holdings on aircraft, what we call "the last known location." This is either where it was picked up on the radar or where the pilot radioed us his position.*

*In one particular crash, we had an aircraft that we had a last known location for. This is the one the three Montagnards also had information about. It took us 2 days overland to get to the location they pinpointed. The actual crash*

*site proved to be 18 kilometers away from our "last known location."*

*Of course, again this is just one of the many difficulties that face my teams. We are really in effect, an investigation organization. Had we gone in on the site at the coordinates, I would have started an aerial search 18 kilometers away.*

*We might not have found this aircraft had the indigenous personnel not known its true location. The crash site was in high mountainous terrain and over five years old. There was no visual sign from the air that there was any crash down there. The trees were so tall and heavy around it that we called for the support of a helicopter with full entry equipment—the jungle penetrators—rather than try to clear a landing-zone for the helicopters we generally use.*

**CD:** In the majority of cases these crash and gravesites are *of quite some duration, like five or more years, are they not?*

**Gen. Kingston:** *We go the whole span, from the first casualties the United States suffered in the war right up to the last ones. These are the crash sites and gravesites that logically, we believe, contain the remains of our U.S. personnel.*

**CD:** With the crash and site situation being what it is—the trauma of an aircraft crash plus often much elapsed time—what is the state of the remains your teams have found and can expect to find in the future?

**Gen. Kingston:** *These are skeletal remains, of course.*

*Often they are broken up, co-mingled and most likely scattered. In many cases, we found them washed away from a crash site, downhill. We have to go through the identification process of matching up each one of the remains into a skeleton and then try to make positive identification.*

**CD:** You say skeletal remains. But in almost no case can you expect to find the complete skeleton, can you?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Usually not when the site involves a crash. In a grave—and, of course, we're after graves as well as crashes—if the remains were placed—and we have had some that were retrieved—they're usually intact.*

**CD:** Apparently it isn't enough just to obtain positive identification of an aircraft, is it? Don't you also have to find some identifying characteristics within the remains themselves before what you call "a positive identification" can be made?

**Gen. Kingston:** *That is correct. My forensic pathologists and my physical anthropologists are the identification experts. They operate in our Central Identification Laboratory, which is located at Samae San, south of Bangkok, near U-Topao Royal Thai Naval Base.*

*We must—for positive identification—not only attempt to identify the aircraft which the remains were in, but also to physically identify the remains as being that of the individual we're after. Of course, we have the dental and health records of the individuals, which we have obtained from the Services. My identification experts, using as a base the data about the man we suspect to be in that aircraft because of the identification of the aircraft, narrow the field down considerably. In some cases, we've found a grave that contained a Caucasian and knew when the man was buried. That narrows it down somewhat, the time element. But we still have to find out, through identification, who the individual is before we can recommend to the Service that his status be changed from MIA to dead.*

**CD:** In one recovery operation you cited a case in which the aircraft was positively identified and at least partial remains for each of the full crew were found. Is this data enough to make the positive identification within your unit's mission and then for the appropriate Service to make a determination of date of death?

**Gen. Kingston:** *No. We return the remains to the Central Identification Laboratory; and, again each remains must be identified. That's when the positive identification is made.*

*We send our findings back to the United States Memorial Affairs Agency in Washington, which either confirm our findings or asks for additional information. They may even ask for the remains before they accept the identification. This is a very time-consuming and thorough process. Of course, it must be sufficient to make a positive identification.*

**CD:** In another search and recovery operation you described how your teams excavated a beach area. Three possible gravesites were involved, were they not.

**Gen. Kingston:** *That's correct. As a result of the public communications program that we have supporting our activities—where we get the word out to the indigenous in the different areas that we're looking for crash and gravesites—three fishermen in South Vietnam came to the Americans of the Consul General Office. They told us they heard we were looking for Americans and informed us that about five years ago they had buried an American whom they had found washed up on the beach.*

*When we got to that area, one very emphatically said, "Dig here!" Another, equally emphatically, told us to dig in another place about 50 meters away. At that time, the third fisherman couldn't make up his mind. We returned him to his home about 20 kilometers north of where the site was.*

*During the first 2 days, we sifted, I estimated, about 100 tons of sand, looking for remains. Some time during the night, the individual who couldn't make up his mind, hired a boat on his own and moved down to the excavation site on the beach. He was waiting there for us the third day. He told us a third place to dig. We did, and there's where we found the remains.*

**CD:** After seeing the film in your press briefing, I would compare your site operation very closely with an archeological operation, certainly with regard to the care with which you excavate a site and the way in which you must handle what you find.

**Gen. Kingston:** *You are entirely right. Once we get into a site, a thorough initial search is made, a ground search. Then the excavation is conducted. We're looking for very small particles of remains, teeth, and other small bones, as well as any larger findings. It is a sifting process. Also, it's a time-consuming process. It's just not going in and making a pickup and moving out; it's a thorough search, plus doing any excavation necessary. The dirt, sand or whatever it is actually must be sifted and handled, not by the shovelful, but in many cases by the handful. In one operation in which an aircraft engine was 35 feet underground, a large crater had to be pumped free of water even before the excavation and digging could be done.*

**CD:** How does the JCRC get its data regarding the casualties, the MIA's and body-not-recovered personnel?

**Gen. Kingston:** *All the information I have comes from the Services.*

**CD:** So, your organization doesn't originate data concerning the status of a particular person, that is, you don't add a name as MIA or KIA or transfer an MIA to KIA status, say?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Under no circumstances. The Service Secretaries are the only individuals who can change the status of individual MIA to BNR or KIA.*

**CD:** Yours is the location, recovery, identification . . .

**Gen. Kingston:** *And recommendation. If recovery and identification are made—or if we go in on an operation and we fail to make a recovery—then recommendation would be forthcoming to the memorial service activity and to the Service Secretaries as part of my after-action report on that operation.*

**CD:** You have emphasized that obtaining authority to enter certain areas of Southeast Asia—in fact, all areas except those controlled by South Vietnam at the present time—is one of the factors seriously limiting search and recovery efforts. Do you expect this to change soon?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing. However, the Communists have not cooperated in the past.*

**CD:** The JCRC charter does not include active participation in the negotiations; so you work with the Four-Party Joint Military Team in breaking this impasse as far as it pertains to access to areas controlled by North Vietnam and the PRG. Is that right?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Yes, that is right. I work closely with the Chief of the U.S. Delegation on the Four-Party Joint Military Team, but neither I nor my staff participate in the negotiations. I watch the progress of the U.S. Delegation very closely, of course.*

**CD:** Regarding the 23 American prisoners whom the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) reported as having died while held PW in North Vietnam, do you anticipate that permission to return these remains to the United States can be obtained soon?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Actually there are 24 —23 who reportedly died in captivity and an additional unidentified American who was not a PW. These men are buried in two separate cemeteries in the Hanoi area. JCRC teams, when permission is granted, will most likely be allowed to accompany Four-Party Joint Military Team representatives to Hanoi for the repatriation of these remains.*

*I've had my specialists up there already on two different occasions, on May 11 and May 18, coordinating the eventual pickup of these remains. When that will be allowed, I really have no feel for at this time.*

**CD:** Getting authority for you to do this is, again, in the negotiations channel and not with your operational area, is it not?

**Gen. Kingston:** *That's correct. That's in the Four-Party Joint Military Team negotiations.*

**CD:** You have spoken several times of the dedication and know-how of personnel assigned to the JCRC. Are these people selected especially for their assignments?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Many of the people filling our 175 authorized slots have been hand-picked because of prior assignments and other factors. Most of my initial people had at least one tour in Vietnam, so they're obviously very motivated to get on with this mission. Before going into an operation, the members of our five-man casualty resolution teams are put through an intensive 6-week training program in Thailand.*

*There is no question that the personnel of the JCRC are highly motivated, in fact, dedicated to exhausting all means possible within their control to try to identify and return the MIA/BNR remains to their loved ones. One of our most experienced enlisted men, in fact, dropped his plans to retire so that he could stay on this mission.*

**CD:** You have mentioned a public communications program conducted among the populace. Will you tell us more about that program?

**Gen. Kingston:** *In conjunction with my actual operations, we have initiated a public communications program in Southeast Asia, specifically at this time in South Vietnam. Its purpose is to make sure that the local population knows that we are seeking information about MIA/BNR personnel and welcome assistance in pinpointing crash sites and gravesites.*

*It's a mass media program in which we go from the sophisticated television and radio spot announcements down to the unsophisticated dealings with the ethnic minorities and the transient groups, in which many are illiterate.*

*What we've done has been in conjunction with the Embassies and the U.S. Information Service and the host country's media services, again working through their district and province chiefs.*

*Through the mass media program we get the word out to the indigenous, whether they're minority groups or Vietnamese, that we are looking for crash sites and gravesites. We have built in what we call a feedback mechanism so this information can get back through their tribal, through their local governmental channels back to the Americans in the country. This way the Americans in the country, the Consuls General and other Embassy personnel, have a way of being informed, through the local travel system and through the local governmental system, that crash and gravesites have been located. Through this program, we hope the sites that we do not know the location of can be pinpointed with the help of what the population knows about crash and gravesites in specific areas.*

*We have a compensation program that we coordinate with the U.S. Embassy and with the host government. Through this program, we compensate local people for assistance and information. We've had some excellent results with this program so far in South Vietnam.*

**CD:** Local officials and citizens, then, augment the JCRC teams in locating and exploring crash and gravesites once this word has gotten back to you and an operation gets underway.

**Gen. Kingston:** *Through this mass media program we do*

*rely on local citizens but not for the exploitation. We do the actual investigation ourselves.*

*We do rely on governmental officials and on the population for specific crash and gravesite information. And we need them to go into the various areas with us. So far, we have entered only areas controlled by South Vietnam. Eventually, I hope to be operating in the PRG-controlled areas, in the Pathet Lao-controlled areas, and in North Vietnam. When I go into these areas, I obviously want somebody from those organizations in my aircraft and accompanying my teams when I go in. I have an overt, humanitarian organization and I have one mission. That is, casualty resolution activity through Southeast Asia. I'm not going to insert, under any circumstances, my teams into an area where they could possibly get into hostilities or where they could possibly come into any type of conflict. So, as I get authority to move into areas in other parts of Southeast Asia, the indigenous personnel in each of these areas will play a most important role.*

*My teams also hire local indigenous personnel to assist us in digging and assist us in our searches. However, we caution them that, when they find a crash or gravesite, they should leave it alone and let us, the trained professionals, conduct the actual search. We don't want them doing a search, thinking they are helping us. Since they're untrained, they would really do more disturbance to the remains than they would assistance to us.*




**CD:** Will you describe in some detail the overwater search operation now going on off the coast of South Vietnam in the DaNang-Hue area?

**Gen. Kingston:** *I have a chartered ship. The Chief of Salvage Operations for the United States Navy has chartered a U.S. flagship out of Singapore.*

*It uses underwater side-scanning sonar. They can locate down to a much greater depth, but they can only operate down to a depth of 180 feet. Operating on a 24-hour-a-day basis, they have a capability of searching a 4-mile-square area. And they do operate 24 hours a day.*

*Once a sighting is made, using either divers or underwater cameras or TV, we try to make an identification of the crash. Then, of course, if we identify it as one having remains and we believe remains are still in it or associated with it, they will put down the divers, do a thorough investigation, and attempt to retrieve the remains.*

*This charter ship was a test operation and terminated the end of September. Results of the tests are being evaluated at this time.*

**CD:** In summary, General Kingston, can you give us some time frame in which it can be expected that most of the approximately 2,400 MIA/BNR personnel will have been located, recovered, and identified? Will it take months or do you anticipate that it will take years?

**Gen. Kingston:** *To begin with, I don't predict that we will actually locate all of the MIA/BNRs. I have no idea, and obviously cannot say at this time, what percentage we hope to recover. In my opinion, it's going to be a long process. We're talking years, not months. We've been operating since May 8 —actually on field operations—and it's a slow, tedious process.*

**CD:** When you say years, are you saying these might even run into years during which your unit, as such, is no longer operating?

**Gen. Kingston:** *Yes. The United States Government, of course, will never stop the search. When it becomes a point in time when the JCRC should go out of business, I predict that the MIA/BNR search operations—in conjunction again with the public communications program that will continue —will revert probably to the control of American Embassies in each one of the countries involved.*

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**BRIEFING—Brig. Gen. Robert C. Kingston, USA, commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, explains his organization's role, during a Pentagon press conference, in resolving the status of U.S. personnel missing in Southeast Asia. Headquartered at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, the JCRC has the mission of resolving the status of U.S. missing-in-action and body-not-recovered personnel by conducting operations to locate and investigate crash sites/gravesites and recover remains.**

# JCRC Resolves Status of MIAs, BNRs

The Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) is the U.S. military unit given the mission of assisting in resolving the status of those U.S. personnel missing in action (MIA) and those personnel declared dead whose bodies were not recovered (BNR). The JCRC was established on January 23, 1973, and has been operating from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base in northeast Thailand since February 15, 1973.

Commanded by Army Brigadier General Robert C. Kingston, the JCRC is a joint task force established by and under the command of the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific. It is under the operational control of the Commander, United States Support Activities Group (USSAG).

The unit operates under a Joint Chiefs of Staff-approved mission, with a joint table of distribution.

The JCRC is an outgrowth of United States Government efforts to identify, document, and maintain records of known and suspected missing in action and prisoners of war. These records were initially maintained by the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) in Saigon, beginning in 1966. When the JCRC was established in Saigon in January of this year, the records of the JPRC were turned over to the new organization. Following approval of the Royal Thai Government, the JCRC relocated to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base the following month. In its current location, JCRC is centrally located in geographical relation to all the areas in which American personnel were lost.

The JCRC performs its mission of resolving the status of American MIA and BNR personnel through the provision of information, coordination, and the conduct of operations to locate and investigate crash and grave sites and recover and identify remains throughout Indochina.

The entire operation is peaceful, open, and humanitarian in nature. The scope of the JCRC mission can best be understood in terms of its workload expressed in numbers of individuals and in the numbers of crash sites that must be located and inspected.

As of July 1, 1973, approximately 1,300 men were carried as missing in action, and more than 1,100 had been declared dead by their Military Service but their remains were not recovered. The specific figures constantly change as new information becomes available and the Services change the status of persons unaccounted for. Approximately 2,400 Americans are in the MIA/BNR categories throughout Indochina: in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Of the total figure, approximately 1,100 are Air Force; 700, Army; 400, Navy; 300, Marine Corps, and the remainder, civilians.

Most of the missing in action are from the Air Force, with the majority of these missing over North Vietnam. Most of those killed whose remains were not recovered are Army men, with the majority of these in South Vietnam.

The other means of explaining the task ahead for the JCRC is by the number of crash sites in which it is expected there might be found the remains of person-



**SEARCHING—A Joint Casualty Resolution Center team member clears a path through jungle growth while searching for a crash site near DaNang, South Vietnam. The JCRC operation is peaceful, open and humanitarian in nature.**

nel unaccounted for, since more than 1,900 of the MIA or BNR personnel were victims of air crashes. There are more than 1,000 such crashes, involving over 50 different types and models of aircraft. The numbers vary from nearly 400 in North Vietnam to 20 in Cambodia. These crash sites are on mountains, in jungles, and in the many other types of rugged terrain found in Indochina.

Approximately 160 of the crashes were at sea. The task becomes even more complex since more than 90 percent of the crash sites are in militarily contested areas or in areas controlled by forces which in the past opposed or at present oppose the United States.

In planning for JCRC field operations, the following assumptions were drawn:

- All Parties concerned will meet their obligations with respect to MIAs and dead as assumed under the Vietnam and Lao agreements and will mutually assist in the resolution of such cases.
- Conditions for coordination with personnel in countries concerned will be provided in accordance with terms of the cease-fire agreements.
- Coordination of in-country activities in Laos and Cambodia will be accomplished through JCRC liaison officers.
- Coordination of in-country activities within North and South Vietnam will be accomplished through negotiations within the Four-Party Joint Military Team.
- Access to all pertinent areas of Southeast Asia will be sought to allow JCRC teams to conduct casualty resolution operations.

Principles of operation for the JCRC were also set, as follows:

- The JCRC has an overt humanitarian mission. It must be totally open in all dealings, avoiding any occurrence which may be considered even by inference as being covert or clandestine.
- JCRC field teams will not operate in a hostile environment.
- Although indigenous and international assistance are very welcome and vital to the JCRC mission, actual on-site investigation and inspection must be accomplished by U. S. specialists assigned to the JCRC or supporting elements.
- The JCRC will be manned by the most motivated, dedicated, professional men available in the U. S. Armed Forces.
- The JCRC is mission-oriented and will be capable of reacting to inevitable changes in operating parameters.

In Saigon, an officer assigned to the Office of the Defense Attache, American Embassy, has been designated to act as a channel for direct communications between JCRC headquarters and the U. S. Delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Team.

The JCRC is organized under a dual-deputy system: The Deputy Commander for Staff Operations is responsible for the staff planning and coordination; the Deputy Commander for Field Operations supervises the field units.

Three staff elements are of particular interest in understanding how the JCRC operates: the public affairs section, the casualty data division, and the operations division.

The public affairs officer on the JCRC staff provides all available information on JCRC activities to the public affairs officer, Military Assistance Command, Thailand, in Bangkok. A JCRC officer is assigned to that office, where he serves as a casualty resolution point of contact and is in constant contact with the JCRC on all casualty resolution matters.

The casualty data division assembles, correlates, and analyzes information on personnel who are missing in the vicinity of crash and burial sites. The function of this division includes data analysis, automated data processing, photo interpretation of aerial photos of crash sites, crash/grave site identification of areas in which JCRC teams will operate, and the maintenance of casualty records or dossiers on those personnel who have been in a missing-in-action status at one time or another during the conflict.

The operations division has a normal function of operations, plans, and communications. It also has a public communications branch, which provides staff assistance in the development of public information programs in an effort to obtain additional information concerning crash and burial sites from the local populations.

The major subordinate elements for field operations are two control teams, one oriented toward operations in Vietnam and one toward Laos and Cambodia. These control teams provide command and control of the JCRC casualty resolution field teams. Each control team includes five men and, when in the field, has operational command of all special augmentation personnel needed to accomplish the mission. Each control team has the capability of launching, supporting, and extracting the field teams and provides for requisite air, communications, and logistics support.

The five members, who as a team search for crash sites or gravesites, include an officer, a radio operator, a medic, an interpreter, and a general duty assistant to the officer-in-charge. All are Special Forces-qualified troops. Special Forces-qualified personnel are used because they are trained to operate harmoniously with indigenous peoples, are familiar with jungle terrain and survival techniques, and are available for this humanitarian effort with minimum additional training.

The field teams are augmented, as required, by Air Force air crash investigators, ordnance demolition technicians provided to disarm unexpended ordnance and booby traps near crash sites, and indigenous personnel who will assist in the search and on-site operations.

The JCRC has 11 organic field teams, with an augmentation capability of 10 more teams from the 1st Special Forces Group on Okinawa and 16 teams from U. S. Special Forces assets in Thailand.

The Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) is located in southeastern Thailand at Samea San, about 80 miles from Bangkok. It is under the operational control of the JCRC. The CIL is organized into an identification laboratory and eight five-man recovery teams, which will accompany the casualty resolution field teams.

The CIL recovery teams can be deployed in various ways. They can be utilized as separate entities in the search operations for selected locations, or they can be deployed in a cluster arrangement. This latter concept visualizes a number of concurrent and consecutive crash sites/gravesite operations located in one general area. This area would be in the vicinity of a forward operating base, which ideally would be adjacent to an air strip that could accommodate arrival, resupply, and departure aircraft.

The cluster concept provides a single area to concentrate on, allows for maximum advantage to be taken of predicted climatic and weather cycles, and maxi-

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mizes the use of helicopters by short but frequent missions to support several teams in one area. Other advantages of this type of operation include enhancing the command, control, and communications support of a number of field teams from the central operating base, facilitating logistics, and reducing the insertion problem of the special augmentation personnel (explosive ordnance disposal, crash investigators, documentary photographers, and CIL recovery teams).

The recovery process includes several precise, well-coordinated operations. First, the casualty resolution staff at JCRC develops selected areas for search and investigation based on known crash and gravesites.

This detailed planning and coordination effort, which uses all available information, culminates in an aerial search of the area, if authority to enter it has been granted. This combined research is followed by insertion of the forward operating base and, later, the field and special augmentation personnel.

A detailed search and inspection of the site follows. The results of these missions are carefully documented. Upon completion of the search and investigation process, the teams and forward operating base are extracted. Remains that have been located are flown to the CIL for identification.

After analysis and recording has been completed, a detailed report will be forwarded to the appropriate Service or Services to assist in final determination on status of the personnel. Identified remains will be returned to the United States for burial as desired by the next-of-kin.

## *Dr. Kissinger 'Extremely Dissatisfied' with MIA Accountability*

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, former Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and sworn in as Secretary of State on September 22, tied economic aid to North Vietnam to satisfactory compliance by the other side with the mission-in-action provisions of the agreement.

He also termed the accounting issue "one of the most unsatisfactory aspects of the implementation of the agreement" and said "we are extremely dissatisfied" with that aspect.

Dr. Kissinger made the statements during hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations prior to Senate confirmation of his nomination as Secretary of State.

Asked what further steps he might take as Secretary of State to secure the compliance of the North Vietnamese in accounting for Americans still listed as prisoner or missing in action, Dr. Kissinger said, "One of the results of our continuing disengagement from Indochina is that the pressures and incentives that we have available are also shrinking."

"We will not be able to proceed with the implementation of the economic assistance provisions—or the negotiation of those—until we have achieved a more satisfactory compliance with the missing-in-action provision of the agreement," he said.

"We will use diplomatic pressure to the extent that it is available to us. And we will have to make clear to the North Vietnamese that the normalization of relations with them, which we would otherwise seek and welcome, is severely inhibited by their slow compliance with the missing-in-action provision."

When asked by Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho) how many of the approximately 1,300 Americans that are listed as prisoners or missing have been accounted for, Dr. Kissinger replied that he did not believe any of them had been accounted for adequately.

"If they have been accounted for," he said, "it has been through the testimony of prisoners who could give us some account of, say, the death of a person who was missing or some other disposition."

"The North Vietnamese were supposed to permit American teams to go to the gravesites and to exhume bodies and to give us other information," Dr. Kissinger continued. "The only cooperation we have received is the visit to gravesites of some 23 Americans who died in captivity in North Vietnam."

Dr. Kissinger recounted that during his February trip to Hanoi he had taken with him some 80 films of persons the United States had specific reasons to believe had been captured. In some cases, he said, pictures were of individuals who looked like the missing persons seen being captured or shown in some prisoner group. Very detailed circumstances of a person's disappearance were provided in other cases. He said his delegation was told by the other side that an immediate investigation would be made.

"So far we have not had any results of that," he said.

Other files containing the best information the United States has about persons still unaccounted for have also been turned over to the other side, he said.

In Laos the ratio of prisoners to those the United States has reason to believe parachuted is smaller than for any other part of Southeast Asia. Dr. Kissinger pointed out that the United States has been promised—upon conclusion of the Lao agreement—the opportunity to search in that country. It may be somewhat easier there, he said, "because the agreement is designed to produce a central government not under North Vietnamese control."

"We are extremely dissatisfied" with the results of the implementation to date of those provisions of the agreement that provide for an accounting for all persons held prisoner or missing in action, Dr. Kissinger reemphasized.

"It is one of the reasons why we cannot proceed in certain other areas such as economic aid negotiations."

Dr. Kissinger pointed out that in every conversation he has had with high Chinese or Soviet officials he has raised this issue of the missing. "When I go to Peking," he said, "I will again bring it to the attention of the Chinese leaders."

He also emphasized having met regularly with representatives of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, including a meeting during the organization's annual meeting in Washington, D. C., in July, and promised to "continue to give it my personal attention."

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